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EUROPE LOOKS AT DETENTE

ANNCR:

IN WESTERN EUROPE, AS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, THERE IS A REASSESSING OF EAST-WEST DETENTE. VOA CORRESPONDENT MARK HOPKINS HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM OUR EUROPEAN BUREAU.

VOICE:

THE WORD "DETENTE " HAS NOT BEEN DROPPED IN WESTERN EUROPE. BUT THE CONCEPT IS GETTING A FRESH LOOK, FOR PROBABLY TWO REASONS.

ONE IS THAT IT HAS NOT PRODUCED ALL THAT WAS EXPECTED. THE RESPECTED SWISS PAPER, NEUE ZUERCHER ZEITUNG, PUT IT IN THESE WORDS... "IN THE ERA OF DETENTE, WHICH PROMISED MORE SECURITY, INSECURITY HAS INCREASED." AND A SECOND REASON SEEMS TO BE AN UNEASY AWARENESS THAT DETENTE DOES NOT MEAN THE SAME IN MOSCOW AS IT DOES IN WESTERN EUROPE, OR THE UNITED STATES.

IF ONLY BECAUSE OF SOVIET PARTY LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV'S MAJOR POLICY ADDRESS AT THE SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS, IT HAS BEEN PUBLICIZED IN WESTERN EUROPE THAT DETENTE -- IN THE SOVIET VIEW -- MEANS A CONTINUING POLITICAL WAR BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, AND MOSCOW'S ACTIVE BACKING OF PRO-SOVIET COMMUNISTS OR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. THIS LIMITED DETENTE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE WHAT WEST EUROPEAN POPULAR THOUGHT EXPECTED FROM THE "OSTPOLITIK" BEGUN UNDER WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT. ON THIS POINT, THE DANISH MILITARY WRITER AND EDITOR NIELS JORGEN HAAGERUP HAS SAID THAT OSTPOLITIK LED MANY PEOPLE TO MAKE RATHER OPTIMISTIC

PREDICTIONS ABOUT DETENTE, AND TO IGNORE THE SOVIET MILITARY BUILD-UP.

AS A CONCRETE MATTER, THE APPARENT STEADY EXPANSION OF SOVIET MILITARY FORCES IS NURTURING CONCERN. A BRITISH DEFENSE MINISTRY STUDY, FOR ONE, HAS LISTED ITEM AFTER ITEM -- LONG RANGE MISSILES, WARSHIPS, TANKS, JET-FIGHTERS -- BEING ADDED IN LARGE NUMBERS TO THE SOVIET INVENTORY. THE WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPER, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, NOTING THE GROWTH OF SOVIET MILITARY POTENTIAL, COMMENTED, "THE ADVANCE OF THE SOVIET FLEET INTO THE WORLD OCEANS BECOMES MORE AND MORE THREATENING TO THE WEST." GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER GEORGE LEBER, ARGUING WESTERN MILITARY OPINION, SAID IN A RECENT INTERVIEW THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS STEPPED UP ITS ARMAMENT IN THE PAST YEAR BEYOND THE SOVIET REQUIREMENT FOR SECURITY."

THE QUESTION, SIMPLY PUT, IS WHY? WHAT ARE THE SOVIET INTENTIONS? AND ONE INCREASINGLY PREVALENT ANSWER IN WEST EUROPEAN COMMENTARIES ON DETENTE IS THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP LOOKS TO THE "FINLANDIZATION" OF EUROPE -- THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION OVER A SMALLER NEIGHBOR.

A RESEARCH PAPER OF THE LONDON-BASED INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES DISCUSSING THIS SEES AN IMPOSING SOVIET MILITARY MACHINE USED TO APPLY POLITICAL PRESSURE ON WESTERN EUROPE. NONE OF THE ANALYSES OR COMMENTARIES, LET ALONE OFFICIAL WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS, IS ABANDONING DETENTE IF, AT THE LEAST, IT IS A MEANS TO CONTROL THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE.

RATHER, IT SEEMS THE LUSTER OF DETENTE HAS DIMMED. IT DOES NOT, AS THE FRENCH POLITICAL SCIENTIST ALFRED GROSSER HAS SAID, FORCE DOMESTIC LIBERAL REFORM IN THE SOVIET UNION, NOR HAS IT LED YET TO ANY VISIBLE REDUCTION IN EUROPEAN ARMED FORCES.

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